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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

PUERTO RICAN PASTORAL

IN THE POLITICAL storm that followed last year's now-famous statement by the Catholic Bishops on birth control, population and public policy, James Reston of the N.Y. *Times* remarked: "The current argument over public policy and birth control has made at least one thing clear. This is that the hierarchy of the United States is not acting in a way to promote the candidacy of Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts or any other Roman Catholic. . . ." In the months since Mr. Reston wrote those words, nothing has happened to challenge his conclusion.

Although bishops and priests are citizens with the same civic rights as any other American, the American Catholic tradition is that they avoid involvement in partisan politics. This year, with a Catholic as the Democratic nominee, the clergy have been particularly careful—indeed, the only exception to the rule that has been called to our attention involves a highly intemperate attack on Senator Kennedy by Father Juniper Carol, O.F.M., a priest who previously wrote in similar terms about The Commonweal and its editors in *Our Sunday Visitor*. Protestant pulpits have been used as anti-Kennedy platforms; we know of no Catholic pulpit that has been turned into a pro-Kennedy rostrum. Protestant publications have opposed Senator Kennedy vigorously; Catholic diocesan papers have been scrupulously neutral.

At this point, we do not think anyone can reasonably suggest that Catholic leaders have in any way been working to advance Senator Kennedy's chances of winning the Presidency. If any last doubts existed on the matter—although it is hard to see how they could—the pastoral letter by the Bishops of Puerto Rico "forbidding" Catholics to vote for the Popular Democratic Party should demolish those doubts once and for all.

Here in New York, one paper said that the pastoral's political implications "stunned many Catholic clergy." We can believe it; it is one thing to defend direct intervention in politics in Italy, as many Catholics did in the case of the recent editorial in *L'Osservatore Romano*, and quite another to justify such intervention as close to home as Puerto Rico.

So far, Catholic leaders have studiously refused to comment on the possible effect of the Puerto Rican pastoral on the American political situation. Senator Kennedy, who stands to lose most, dealt with the question immediately, reaffirming his conviction that it is wholly improper and alien to our system for churchmen of any faith to tell the members of their church for whom to vote or for whom not to vote. Now he can only hope, as we do, that the American people will judge him in the light of his own clear Church-State position and not treat the American election as a vote for or against the Puerto Rican pastoral letter.

WHATEVER its effect on Senator Kennedy's chances, this affair has implications that go far beyond the outcome of any one election. As we see the matter, the governmental attitude in Puerto Rico and episcopal response to that attitude have more a Latin than an American flavor—despite the fact that the three Bishops involved are American citizens and that Puerto Rico is a United States commonwealth.

Puerto Rico, which became a U.S. possession after the Spanish-American war, is often called a Catholic island, but, as in many other places, the description seems to confuse national cultural heritage and religion. A serious shortage of priests exists, educational standards are low, and the general level of religious practice is reported to be not

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much better. Widespread poverty remains a pressing problem.

The Popular Democratic regime of Governor Luis Munoz Marin, which has no connection with the Democratic party here, has in the last twenty years made great strides in meeting some of the island's worst social and economic problems. At the same time it has also supported public health clinics which encourage artificial birth control and provide contraceptive devices, and it has refused Catholic requests for some sort of released-time program to combat the widespread religious illiteracy. Despite the fact that Governor Munoz is said to regard himself as a Catholic (although divorced), the present regime at times has the air of the laicized rather than lay state—a state with genuinely anti-clerical leanings which wants religion safely confined to the sacristy.

If all this is true—and we think it is—the Puerto Rican pastoral nonetheless raises more problems about the Church and politics than it solves. On the purely practical level, we think its long-range effect is bound to be bad, even if short-range goods are accomplished—and this we doubt, if only because of the anti-clericalism it is certain to awaken in Puerto Rico and throughout Latin America. And on the theoretical level, the nature of this Catholic intervention seems to us singularly ill-conceived.

In a modern democratic society, the Church and the state meet in the person of the voter who is a citizen, so to speak, of both. His vocation lies in the temporal order, and it is his responsibility to apply Christian principles to specific situations. Bishops must obviously concern themselves with the formation of a Christian conscience by the voter. But for the Bishops flatly to forbid Catholics to vote for the Popular Democratic party, as was done in this case, seems to us to confuse more than clarify the complex relationship between religion and politics. This is particularly true since the question of authority raised by such letters is, to say the least, highly ambiguous.

Thus in the United States an unidentified "Boston ecclesiastical authority" described the Puerto Rican pastoral simply as a "directive," noting that it carried with it no ecclesiastical penalties for non-compliance. Queried by reporters on the subject, Cardinal Spellman of New York was quoted as saying that Puerto Rican voters would not commit a sin if they disregarded the directive of the Bishops, a view shared by Archbishop James P. Davis of San Juan, one of the letter's signers. But, on the other hand, Bishop McManus of Ponce, formerly of Brooklyn, who is thought to have inspired the letter, said that "those who knowingly violate the injunction commit sin—the sin of disobedience."

In one sense it is not so important that publication of the Puerto Rican Bishops' letter was embarrassing to Senator John F. Kennedy as a Presidential candidate; in another and larger sense this fact is important, for it dramatically illustrates the problems many Catholics have yet to face in this crucial area of religion, politics, and authority. At this point it is hard to be grateful, but if the Puerto Rican letter leads to more attention to these unsettled questions, it may yet turn out to have performed a real service, if only in a negative fashion.

HEATING UP THE CAMPAIGN

VICE PRESIDENT NIXON is reportedly being urged, and successfully, to "heat up this campaign a little bit." One wonders what temperature Mr. Nixon's advisers have in mind, since the campaign is already about as hot as it can get without burning.

Although the fourth television debate brought out some extremely sharp differences between the candidates, the thrusts and counter-thrusts were fairly restrained in comparison with the political slugging of both men's stump speeches. Vice President Nixon has been lashing out at Senator Kennedy's "gloom, doom, retreat and defeat," his "thirteen misstatements and distortions" and the "immaturity and rashness" of his remarks about Cuba. Senator Kennedy in turn has been challenging the "truth and accuracy" of the Vice President's statements on unemployment and on the effect of

NEXT WEEK

CHARLES BURTON MARSHALL discusses Communist China's assets and liabilities.

"The opportunities before Red China have arisen from the weaknesses in surrounding areas. In all too many of them tyranny and avarice have been the marks of rulership and apathy the curse of the ruled, bonds of identity have been weak, and independence has brought only frustration. All this has raised the power quotient of Peiping and has given the ring of plausibility to designs to revive the Chinese family of nations as a stepping stone to wider triumphs."

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Mr. Kennedy's minimum wage proposals; he has been charging the Vice President with being afraid to meet him in an open, fifth debate; and he has been denouncing the Administration's Cuba policy as "too little, too late."

This last point—U.S. policy in relation to Cuba—has brought about a curious reversal in the positions one might have expected the candidates to take. Mr. Kennedy has urged a kind of "get tough" policy toward Cuba; Mr. Nixon has maintained that the steps advocated by his rival, especially that of giving help to anti-Castro forces inside and outside of Cuba, would violate our treaty obligations not to interfere in the internal affairs of another nation.

On the whole, we think the Vice President has taken the more responsible position in regard to Cuba. It is true, as Mr. Nixon will not admit, that the Administration's Latin American policies have been ineffective and shortsighted; it is also true that U.S. policy in Latin America has tended consistently to support undemocratic and unpopular regimes as long as they were anti-Communist. But Senator Kennedy's prescriptions for remedying the results of these policies in Cuba would have us err in the opposite direction, and might well rouse even deeper anti-Yankee feelings in the rest of Latin America.

If Mr. Kennedy had phrased his criticism of the Administration's Latin American record in more careful terms, he might have made substantially the same point. But he did not use careful terms. What he said was sweeping and dramatic—but it was also oversimplified and, as has been charged, "dangerous." Mr. Kennedy's original statement has already been modified—"clarified" is the standard political term—and presumably little damage has been done, but there is no doubt that the Senator was guilty of a blunder.

It has been said that slips like this are an inevitable consequence of the American campaign system and the fierce partisanship it engenders. As the campaign goes on, according to this view, candidates feel it necessary to press harder and harder against their opponents, and in every possible area, with an almost predictable decline in the responsibility and usefulness of their charges.

We do not agree. We think that candidates can and must resist the temptation to press for political advantage at all costs. In the past we have criticized Mr. Nixon for his falls from grace in this respect, and we regret that Senator Kennedy, for the first time in the campaign, has also slipped into irresponsibility.

If there is any lesson to be drawn from this, we think it runs precisely counter to the wishes of the Nixon counselors quoted above. In our judgment, the campaign is quite hot enough already.

FREEDOMS, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS

ONLY AN unrealistic optimism would have allowed one to expect the campaign to proceed without constant discussion of the "religious issue." The legacy which our national history has bequeathed to us makes such discussion inevitable. That legacy contains, of course, much that all Americans must cherish and protect. It is one of our greatest guarantees that religious and political freedom will be extended to all Americans.

But our legacy is not unmixed; it does not come to us pure and undefiled. For that legacy has brought to us prejudices we have yet to overcome and misunderstandings that we have yet to clarify. This election, because of the stress on the religion of one candidate, because of the attention that has been centered on the relations of Church and State, of religion and society, offers some opportunity to dissipate prejudice and misunderstanding. Many individuals and groups—Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and secular—have taken advantage of this opportunity and have made statements whose value will extend well beyond this election and this time. From their efforts much good will come.

But there are, clearly, grave temptations and, unfortunately, to these many have succumbed. This can be a cause only for deep regret and apprehension. Anyone who employs religious bigotry for partisan political purposes does a disservice both to religion and the party he purports to help. And in an area as charged with politico-religious tensions and emotions great care should be taken that, even inadvertently, bigotry not be encouraged. We think that the United Auto Workers did well, for example, to express regret for circulating a pamphlet which was readily interpreted to mean that a vote for Senator Kennedy was a vote for liberty, while a vote for Mr. Nixon was a vote for bigotry. And, while we see that it may be desirable to distribute to Protestants who misunderstand and fear Catholicism the film clips of Mr. Kennedy's reply to the Texas ministers, we see little need to show the film before Catholics who, presumably, have no such fears.

While these practices are open to legitimate criticism, they are not, unfortunately, the most dangerous practices which are attendant upon the present

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political campaign. More dangerous are those formulations on religion and politics which obscure necessary distinctions, which will perpetuate themselves and remain virulent long after the election.

Within recent weeks several such formulations have appeared in widely publicized statements. The first, which was signed by James Buckley, appeared as an advertisement in the N.Y. *Times*. In the form of "An Open Letter to American Catholics" the advertisement stated that yes, there *is* a Catholic issue. It went on to say that the issue did not depend upon the religion of the candidate but upon the ability of the candidate to resist Communism, the arch foe of religion, and by this criterion one should vote for Mr. Nixon.

The second statement, by Claire Booth Luce, appears in the November issue of *McCall's* magazine. Mrs. Luce, too, says there is a religious issue. But she is led in a quite different direction. Her reasoning does not readily lend itself to brief summary, but this quotation will suggest the direction she follows.

"This nation," writes Mrs. Luce, "founded under God, was dedicated to the principle of religious freedom. When a man votes for a candidate who shares his precious beliefs, he is honestly exercising the very freedom guaranteed to him by the Founding Fathers. Such a man cannot be called a bigot. . . . There is surely nothing unreasonable or hypocritical about a Catholic's voting for another Catholic, whose religious beliefs he holds reasonable."

Putting aside the possibility of divergence between theory and practice (Mrs. Luce's theory would, presumably, lead her to support Mr. Kennedy, but she has declared herself for Mr. Nixon), these two statements are reverse sides of the same bad coin. For the first statement, Mr. Buckley's open letter to Catholics, would dangerously tie religious interests to political. In this case, he would tie the Catholic Church to the political interests of a particular nation, a particular party, even a particular candidate.

Mrs. Luce, on the other hand, would dangerously tie political interests to the religious. She suggests that citizens, in this case Catholics, put aside their political parties, political judgments, political allegiances and vote on the basis of religious commitment.

These statements lead in opposite directions, for one would lead Catholics to vote for Mr. Nixon, the other for Mr. Kennedy. They are, however, equally invalid. Since the confusions in Mrs. Luce's thought are more readily apparent, it is probably less dangerous. One can point out, for example, that one exercises political freedom, not religious freedom, in the polling booth. And if one puts competency aside, one might just as well hire a Catholic life guard without regard to his swimming ability as vote for a Catholic candidate without considering his political qualifications.

The presumptions of Mr. Buckley's statement are less obvious. Yet history is replete with examples of the harm that befalls both country and Church when their interests are confused and improperly united. By all means let people vote for the candidate and the party they judge will most benefit the nation, will best conserve and transmit those high values of Western civilization to which Christianity has so greatly contributed. But let the judgment be a political judgment made with the full awareness that the Church transcends this time, this place, and this highly fallible political judgment.

JUST LUCKY, WE GUESS

PITY THE editors of the New York *Catholic News*. "Due to an unfortunate mechanical error at our printing plant," as they explain to subscribers, a political cartoon intended for another newspaper appeared in place of the non-political cartoon scheduled to run on the editorial page of one of their recent issues. This was bad enough, but the cartoon that appeared was intended for the A.F.L.-C.I.O. *News*, of all publications, and showed a fat and self-satisfied "Eisenhower Administration" telling a bandaged and limping "U.S. Economy" that "You never looked better."

It was too late to do anything about the 38,000 copies of the *Catholic News* that went out to startled subscribers, but the editors ordered distributors to destroy the copies they had been sent and had another 80,000 copies of the paper run off, this time with the offending cartoon removed. Postcards of explanation were then immediately sent to the subscribers.

Errors like these can and do plague every publication, but it does seem that the *Catholic News* has had more than its share of bad luck in this respect. It was the *Catholic News* that a few years back carried an ad for a lecture by a former member of the Papal Guards, with the title of the lecture rendered in big, black type as "I Served the Dope." After a whopper like that, one would think, the *Catholic News* should have been immune to typos for life.

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The Difference to Me

The fading cliché of the current campaign is that there is no real difference between the candidates

by JAMES FINN

BY THE TIME election day arrives one of the hardiest myths of the 1960 Presidential campaign—that there are no differences between the candidates—may, mercifully, have been laid to rest. There are already strong signs that it is dying. This article is written to help it on its way.

During the early weeks of the current campaign for the Presidency of the United States, I was visited by a feeling of political unreality that I had experienced only once before—during the election returns of 1948. I was in Chicago when I heard those predictions of Dewey's victory along with the early scattered returns that favored Truman. At first the discrepancy was neither surprising nor disconcerting; it could be accounted for. The rural areas were still to be heard from. But as the morning hours approached, and the Truman totals soared, and the untroubled voice continued to proclaim Dewey the victor, the feeling of unreality became distinctly troublesome. It was as if, with signs of dawn already breaking in the East, the commentator were declaring with calm assurance, "and today the sun will rise in the West."

The unreality which pervaded the early weeks of this campaign did not derive, of course, from the calm prediction of an overwhelming victory for either candidate. It derived, rather, from a frequently stated assertion that it didn't make any difference who won. John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon, several commentators said, were the first political twins to attempt to divide the voters' allegiance. There was no discernible difference and the voter was, consequently, left with no choice. This lack of choice, lack of conflict, was supposedly confirmed by a lack of interest among the voters, by a general nationwide apathy.

Since the large crowds which greeted both candidates, even early in the campaign, did not allow me to think that the nation was blanketed with apathy, and since the candidates looked distinct and distinctly different to me, I regretted the existence of this myth which, prematurely delivered by some commentators and too readily accepted by others, seemed to feed on itself. The appearance of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s political pamphlet *Kennedy or Nixon: Does It Make any Difference?* (Macmillan. $1.95) was to me particularly welcome. Mr. Schlesinger meets the current political clichés head-on. He writes as an avowed partisan and friend of Senator Kennedy, but no one who reads the pamphlet—whether he was previously a partisan for Kennedy, for Nixon, or uncommitted—will be any longer comfortable with the cliché. What is particularly interesting is that Mr. Schlesinger wrote weeks before the television debates between the candidates and before their most vigorous campaigning got under way and that much of what he wrote has been borne out in these recent weeks.

IN ITS FULL splendor, the principal cliché of this campaign goes something like this. There is little or no difference between the parties, their general policies are the same, and the candidates are practically mirror images. Not only are they said to be alike, but they are alike in an ugly way. Both Kennedy and Nixon are allegedly cool, calculating and ambitious. They are the apotheosis of the organization man; they manipulate emotions, but feel none themselves. One reporter who discerned some differences yet said they were joined in one intangible but terrible quality: "Neither seems to be a man at whose funeral strangers would cry."

One could explore the grounds from which the cliché sprang. For there are superficial resemblances between the candidates and their careers. But rather than speculate how these surface similarities led some people to the superficial conclusion that Kennedy and Nixon are essentially alike, it may be better to examine the essential differences that become, with every passing day, increasingly clear.

Mr. Finn is an associate editor of The Commonweal.

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Vice-President Nixon has been on the national political scene for some years—and has no definite political identification. This is an achievement of no mean proportions. It means that he can talk of "the Eisenhower-Nixon Administration" not only as if the Presidency were a partnership but as if the partners never disagreed. While doing this he can, with some concessions, draw Governor Rockefeller into his camp and, at the same time, persuade Senator Barry Goldwater that he is, deep down, really conservative. By these means the Vice-President has staked out the widest possible ground for maneuvering within the party; for if any three men can represent the range within the Republican Party they are Rockefeller, Eisenhower and Goldwater. But it also suggests that, at this late date in his political career, even his most valuable supporters do not know his true commitments.

Any politician in office for a number of years will make contradictory statements from time to time, but the list of Mr. Nixon's is impressively long. He once said that history would judge Secretary Benson to be "one of the best Secretaries of Agriculture in our history." If so he has opposed himself to history's verdict, for he has made clear his present opposition to Benson. In 1958 he delivered a speech in which he said that we should "speak less of the threat of Communism and more of the promise of freedom." During the present campaign, he has seemed to reverse the injunction. In 1958 Mr. Nixon, speaking before the Newspaper Publishers Association, pointed to the "sobering fact [that] the Soviet economy is growing faster than ours." A few weeks ago he termed his opponent a "spokesman of national disparagement" for pointing out the same fact. Not long ago he favored, as President Eisenhower and Senator Kennedy still do, repeal of the restrictive Connally Amendment under which the United States, alone among NATO nations, reserved the right to judge which cases come under the jurisdiction of the World Court. Recently, even to the surprise of some of Nixon's advisers, Senator Goldwater produced a statement in which the Vice-President had, in effect, quite reversed his course. Mr. Nixon tells the voters not to vote by label or party but to be discriminating and vote for the best man; he then says that he himself will support the entire Republican ticket across the country.

This list of contradictory positions, which are of varying degrees of importance, could be greatly extended. But the point is already clear. Mr. Nixon has, chameleon-like, adapted himself and his opinions to the demands of the immediate political surroundings. Because he is committed to no political philosophy, because he follows in no political tradition, because almost every general statement of principle is balanced by its counterpart, Mr. Nixon is free to move readily from a "liberal" Rockefeller position to a conservative or reactionary Goldwater position, pausing to say a few words for Eisenhower Republicanism on the way. But this freedom is superficial, deceptive and dangerous, for it is based entirely upon the freedom to respond. A man who achieves such "freedom" is free to follow strong opinions but not to form them. He can place himself at the head of surging opinion—if he can first detect where it is going. He can give the appearance of leadership but not leadership itself.

In this role, which does require intelligence and a sensitivity to the reactions of others, Mr. Nixon functions very well. He is articulate, shrewd and comfortably reassuring. In a time free from crisis, domestic and international, his particular qualities could be very useful.

SENATOR John F. Kennedy, who entered Congress at the same time as his opponent, has shown himself to be a completely different kind of person. Outspoken from his years as a freshman Congressman, Mr. Kennedy has delivered major statements on most of the grave issues of our time. Those statements—many of which are collected in his book, *The Strategy of Peace*—and his voting record indicate what he believes, how he will act, and in what direction he will move.

There are some contradictions in Mr. Kennedy's record. He, too, once favored Secretary Benson but does no longer. He, too, once held a more benign view of Senator McCarthy than he now does. But on the other major issues of our time where Senator Kennedy has changed, the change is a development, not a contradiction, of his earlier opinions. The record is so consistent that, without knowing his stand on some particular issue, one could safely guess and stand an excellent chance of being right. One who was acquainted with the issues would, for example, guess that he opposed the loyalty oath in education bills, that he favors the extension of social security benefits to include medical care for the aged, that he expressed strong moral support for the "sit ins." And one would have guessed right. Still, this merely indicates that he generally adheres to a recognizable political tradition. It reveals neither depth of interest, real conviction, nor original thinking.

But, as Mr. Schlesinger points out, "he has regularly devoted speeches . . . to topics whose only significance lies in the remote future . . . issues far in advance of packages and hackneyed opinion, because they interest *him* and strike *him* as crucial—whether or not anyone in the audience is ready to respond or to appreciate." For example, he early called attention to the impending crisis in Indo-China and suggested a policy similar to that which was eventually followed. He raised a small furor in 1957 with his stand on

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Algeria, a stand now regarded not only as possible but desirable. In 1958 he gave a speech on U.S.-Latin American relations which is as sturdy and applicable now as it was then. It has been urged that a large contributing factor to these speeches was the lure of the 1960 election. This is possible, but the same lure did not contribute as much, apparently, to several other potential candidates.

ANOTHER DIFFERENCE, and a major difference, exists in what may be described as the "style" of the candidates. One gauge of Kennedy's style is the manner in which he dealt with the religious issue and the way he has buried all discussion about youth and an alleged lack of experience. Kennedy met the questions concerning his religion directly and head-on. All substantive questions that could legitimately be asked he answered unequivocally, and many questions that are irrelevant. After the first T.V. debate between the Vice President and the Senator, only scattered partisans thought there was still some political mileage in stressing Kennedy's age and his supposed political inexperience. It was all too evident that he spoke with at least equal authority and that he had an impressive grasp of facts, figures and sundry details. His major fault may well have been that he appealed too little to the emotions.

Nixon, on the other hand, has a quite recognizable and effective style. The "Checkers" speech remains the classic example, but almost any major address will do. Facts and sound information are employed, but they are all too often left behind in a blatant appeal to emotions. In itself this is not necessarily harmful; unfortunately, however, the emotional appeal frequently has little to do with any political issue.

A couple of examples from the third T.V. debate will reveal this great difference in style. When Senator Kennedy was asked how one could determine whether American prestige was declining, he responded in a methodical fashion, ticking off the ways: first, the statements of George Allen, head of our information service; second, the ascertainable greater growth of the Soviet Union compared to the United States; third, a recent Gallup Poll of opinion in other countries; fourth, the recent votes at the U.N. And each point was developed with facts and accurate paraphrases.

When Mr. Nixon was asked to comment on the rude language Harry Truman had used in discussing the Republicans he replied: "One thing I've noted as I travel around the country . . . I see mothers holding their babies up so they can see a man who might be the President of the United States . . . And I only hope that, should I win this election, that I could approach President Eisenhower in maintaining the dignity of the office; in seeing to it that whenever any mother or father talks to his child, he can look at the man in the White House and, whatever he may think of his policies, he will say, there's a man who maintains the kind of standards personally that I would want my child to follow."

There is clearly no danger that either Mr. Kennedy or Mr. Nixon will adopt the style of either Mr. Truman or President Eisenhower. And no one is going to run on a platform that opposes decent language. Further, the question is, as Nixon suggested, quite apart from the issues. Yet in a valuable, nationwide debate where no single serious issue can be adequately discussed Mr. Nixon spoke up fearlessly, humbly, and at considerable length, on behalf of little children and parenthood.

These answers of Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Nixon are, I submit, typical. Mr. Kennedy, of course, is not always as sharp and clear in his answers nor is Mr. Nixon always as emotional and irrelevant. The point is that Mr. Nixon rarely gives the point-by-point factual response Mr. Kennedy did, and Mr. Kennedy never makes the naked, emotional and irrelevant response that Mr. Nixon gave. Mr. Kennedy tends to give the hard, disagreeable facts which demand attention and engage the intelligence. Mr. Nixon tends to give the reassuring generalization which comforts and which attaches the pleasurable emotions.

CLEARLY ALL wisdom does not reside in one party, nor does one candidate possess all the political virtues. No party or candidate has ever been, and none in the future will be, free from error, poor judgment and justified criticism. But there are clear and present differences in this campaign and the choice the electorate makes on November 8 will do much to determine our national and individual histories, indeed the histories of nations around the world.

If this were a time of worldwide peace and prosperity, and if it were true, as Mr. Nixon asserts, that "at the present time Communist prestige in the world is at an all-time low and American prestige is at an all-time high," the decision in this election might not be so urgent.

But it is not true that we have worldwide peace and prosperity, and there is much evidence to show and responsible opinion to assert that relative to the U.S.S.R. the power of the U.S. has declined in the last eight years. In this time of crisis—for such it is—the country needs a President who is concerned more with reality than with appearance, more with substance than with technique, more with issues than with images. It needs a man who is assured, authoritative, informed and determined, a man who can persuade others to follow him because he will fight for his positions rather than compromise them, a man who will talk sense to the American people. On the basis of his past record and his present performance, John F. Kennedy appears to be such a man; Richard M. Nixon does not.

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Roots of Our Being

by PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDÍN

WHERE ARE the roots of our being? In the first place they plunge back and down into the unfathomable past. How great is the mystery of the first cells which were one day animated by the breath of our souls! How impossible to decipher the synthesis of successive influences in which we are for ever incorporated! In each one of us, through matter, the whole history of the world is in part reflected. And however autonomous our soul, it is heir to an existence worked upon from all sides—before it came into being —by the totality of the energies of the earth: it meets and rejoins life at a determined level. Then, hardly has it entered actively into the universe at that particular point than it feels, in its turn, besieged and penetrated by the flow of cosmic influences which have to be ordered and assimilated.

Let us look around us: the waves come from all sides and from the farthest horizon. Through every cleft the sensible world inundates us with its riches—food for the body, nourishment for the eyes, harmony of sounds and fullness of the heart, unknown phenomena and new truths, all these treasures, all these urges, all these calls, coming from the four quarters of the world, pass through our consciousness at every moment. What is their role within us? What will their effect be, even if we receive them passively or indistinctly, like bad workmen? They will merge into the most intimate life of our soul, and either develop it or poison it. We only have to look at ourselves for one moment to realize this, and feel either delight or anxiety. If even the most humble and most material of our nourishment is capable of deeply influencing our most spiritual faculties, what can be said of the infinitely more penetrating energies conveyed to us by the music of tones, of notes, of words, of ideas?

We have not, in us, a body to be nourished independently of our soul. Everything that the body has admitted and has begun to transform must be sublimated by the soul in its turn. The soul does this, no doubt, in its own way and with its own dignity. But it cannot escape from this universal contact nor from that unremitting labor. And that is how the characteristic power of understanding and loving, which will form its immaterial individuality, is gradually perfected in it for its own good and at its own risk. We hardly know in what proportions and under what guise our natural faculties will pass over into the final act of the divine vision. But it can hardly be doubted that, with God's help, it is here below that we give ourselves the eyes and the heart which a final transfiguration will transmute into organs of a capacity for adoration and beatification special to each one of us.

THE MASTERS of the spiritual life continue to repeat that God wants only souls. To give those words their true value, we must not forget that the human soul, however independently created our philosophy imagines it to be, is inseparable, in its birth and in its growth, from the universe into which it is born. In each soul, God loves and partly saves the whole world which that soul sums up in an incommunicable and particular way.

Now this summing-up, this synthesis are not given to us ready-made and complete with the first awakening of consciousness. It is we who, through our own activity, must industriously assemble the widely scattered elements. The labor of seaweed as it concentrates in its tissues the substances dispersed, in infinitesimal quantities, throughout the vast layers of the ocean; the industry of bees as they make honey from the juices scattered in so many flowers—these are but pale images of the continuous process of elaboration which all the forces of the universe undergo in us in order to become spirit.

Thus every man, in the course of his life, must not only show himself obedient and docile. By his fidelity he must *construct*—starting from the most natural zone of his own self—a work, an *opus,* into which something enters from all the elements of the earth. *He makes his own soul* throughout all his earthly days; and at the same time he collaborates in another work, in another *opus,* which infinitely transcends, while at the same time it narrowly determines, the perspectives of his individual achievement: the completion of the world.

For in presenting the Christian doctrine of salvation, it must not be forgotten that the world, taken as a whole, that is to say in so far as it constitutes a hierarchy of souls—which appear only successively, develop only collectively and will be completed only in union—the world, too, undergoes a sort of vast "on-

Père Teilhard is well known as the author of *Phenomenon of Man.* This is a section from his just published *The Divine Milieu* (Harper. $3).

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togenesis" in which the development of each soul, assisted by sensible realities, is but a diminished harmonic. Beneath our individual strivings towards spiritualization, the world slowly accumulates, starting with the whole of matter, that which will make of it the Heavenly Jerusalem or the New Earth.

If it is true, as we know from the Creed, that souls pass so intimately into Christ and God, and if it is true, as we know from the most general conclusions of psychoanalysis, that the sensible passes vitally into the most spiritual zones of our souls—then we must also recognize that in the whole process which from first to last activates and directs the elements of the universe, *everything forms a single whole.* And we begin to see more distinctly the great sun of Christ the King, of Christ *amictus mundo* (vested with the world), of the universal Christ, rising over our interior world. Little by little, stage by stage, everything is finally linked to the supreme Center in *quo omnia constant* (in whom all things hold together). The emanations coming from this Center operate not only within the higher zones of the world, where human activities take place in a distinctively supernatural and meritorious form. In order to save and constitute these sublime energies, the power of the Incarnate Word penetrates matter itself; it descends into the deepest depths of the inferior forces. And the Incarnation will be complete only when the part of chosen substance contained in every object—spiritualized first of all in our souls and a second time with our souls in Jesus—has rejoined the final Center of its completion. *Quid est quod ascendit, nisi quod prius descendit, ut repleret omnia.* (Now this "the Ascended," what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth that He might fill all things.)

It is through the collaboration which He stimulates in us that Christ, starting from *all* created things, is consummated and attains His plenitude. St. Paul himself tells us so. We may, perhaps, imagine that the Creation was finished long ago. But that would be quite wrong. It continues still more magnificently, and in the highest zones of the world. *Omnis creatura adhuc ingemniscit et parturit.* (All creation groans and travails in pain until now.) And we serve to complete it, even by the humblest work of our hands. That is, ultimately, the meaning and value of our acts. Owing to the interrelation between matter, soul and Christ, we lead part of the being which He desires back to God *in whatever we do.* With each one of our *works,* we labor—atomically, but no less really—to build the Pleroma; that is to say, we bring to Christ a little fulfillment.

EACH ONE OF our works, by its more or less remote or direct repercussion upon the spiritual world, contributes to perfect Christ in His mystical totality. That is the fullest possible answer to the question: How can we, following the call of St. Paul, see God in all the active half of our lives? In fact, through the unceasing operation of the Incarnation, the divine so thoroughly permeates all our creaturely energies that, in order to encounter and embrace it, we could not find a more appropriate milieu than that of our action.

To begin with, in action I cleave to the creative power of God; I coincide with it; I become not only its instrument but its living prolongation. And since there is nothing more personal in a being than its will, I merge myself, in a sense, through my heart, with the very heart of God. This contact is continuous because I am always acting; and at the same time, since I can never find a limit to the perfection of my fidelity or the fervor of my intention, it enables me to assimilate myself still more narrowly, and indefinitely, to God.

The soul does not pause to enjoy this communion, nor does it lose sight of the material end of its action; it is wedded to a *creative* effort. The will to succeed, a certain passionate delight in the work to be done, form an integral part of our creaturely fidelity. It follows that the very sincerity with which we desire and pursue success for God reveals itself as a new factor—also without limits—in our more perfect conjunction with the All-powerful who animates us. Originally associated with God in the simple common exercise of wills, we now unite ourselves to Him in a common love of the end for which we are working; and the crowning marvel is that, with the possession of this end, we have the utter joy of discovering His presence once again.

All this follows directly from what was said a moment back on the relationship between natural and supernatural actions in the world. Any increase that I can confer upon myself or upon things is translated into some increase in my power to love and some progress in Christ's blessed hold upon the universe. Our work appears to us in the main as a way of earning our daily bread. But its essential virtue is of a higher order: through it we complete in ourselves the subject of the divine union; and through it again we augment in some sense, in relation to ourselves, the divine end of that union, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence whatever our human function may be, whether artist or workingman or scholar, we can, if we are Christians, speed towards the object of our work as though towards an outlet open on the supreme fulfillment of our beings. Indeed, without exaggeration or excess in thought or expression—but simply by confronting the most fundamental truths of our faith and of experience—we are led to the following observation: God is inexhaustibly attainable in the *totality* of our action. And this prodigy of divinization is only comparable to the gentleness with which the metamorphosis is accomplished, without disturbing in any way *(non minuit, sed sacravit . . .)* (He did not lessen, but sanctified) the perfection and unity of human endeavor.

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Britain and the Bomb

by J. L. BENVENISTI

AS A RESULT of its just-concluded annual conference, the British Labor Party may have ceased to exist as a major political force. And the extraordinary defeat suffered by Party Leader Hugh Gaitskell means that he must now wage the political fight of his life to keep the Labor Party, and his own career, from ending in ruin and futility.

The sensational outcome of the Labor Party conference, the importance of which can hardly be exaggerated, was a vote to reject *in toto* the nuclear defense policy of the West—to scrap Britain's own nuclear weapons, to deny NATO the use of airbases on British soil, to withdraw its own forces from NATO and, in short, to transform Great Britain into a completely "neutralist" nation.

Shocking, and ominous for the future, as this development is, it did not come about overnight. Back in September, for example, the British Trades Union Congress did a very remarkable thing, which has been much discussed even in American newspapers. It passed two contradictory and mutually exclusive resolutions. One of these approved the official stand of Mr. Gaitskell and the Labor Party, which was that Britain on economic grounds should abandon the idea of an independent deterrent, and that it should be left to the United States to supply the strategic deterrent for the West—which could only mean that this strategic deterrent should continue to be supplied. The other resolution stated in an even more categorical form that the nuclear defense policy of the West should be rejected completely. Furthermore, by arrangement with the union chiefs, both resolutions were largely supported by the same people.

Naturally, there was a reason for this extraordinary conduct. The Trades Union Congress was faced with a very real problem—and it was thus decided to take this rather Gilbertian way of getting out of it. The great majority of the people of Great Britain have come to accept the American alliance and the strategy on which it relies almost as part of the order of nature. Of course, nobody has anything like a real affection for nuclear weapons or for planes flying overhead with live hydrogen bombs aboard. But only a minority dislikes these things actively enough to worry much about them. Most people accept them as an unavoidable necessity—like death and taxes.

Now the Trades Union Congress and the Labor Party are very intimately linked, and no political party could, it was acknowledged, enjoy any hope of electoral success if it came out with a policy advocating the complete abandonment by the West of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, or Britain's complete dissociation from any power that was equipped with them. In the main such proposals would merely shock and frighten. Hence, within limits, the T.U.C. felt it had to toe the line.

But although the majority attitude is as I have described, there is a growing minority that makes up for its present rather small numbers by the intensity of its feelings. It is sometimes actuated by emotion rather than by thought, but it has now built up such a degree of pressure that it can insist on being heard and can in particular often carry organized bodies along with it.

We could see this pressure process at work in the resolutions tabled for the Labor Party Conference proper which took place in October. Actually, this conference, made up largely of delegates from the local "constituency" parties, tends to reflect the feelings of people who have been less tightly organized and have arrived at their convictions in private. Yet here too we could see the new force in action. Out of four hundred fifteen resolutions tabled for this conference a hundred sixty-one dealt with disarmament and of these hundred sixty-one resolutions no less than eighty explicitly or by clear implication advocated the withdrawal of all foreign nuclear bases from this country.

Now, incredibly, the pressure of this minority opinion has carried along with it the majority of the votes at the Labor Party's Scarborough conference and therefore committed the Party officially to the impossible position described above. Headed by Frank Cousins, leader of the powerful Transport and General Workers Union, the anti-Gaitskell, neutralist trades union forces were able to overwhelm the solidly opposed Labor M.P.'s by a margin of 43,000 votes.

SOMETHING new has clearly come to the surface of British political life. Of this there is no doubt. The question is whether that something will in the fore-

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seeable future become a decisive factor politically. I think perhaps it may.

To assess the probability of this, however, we must look very slightly ahead. When Mr. Gaitskell declared that he would press for the abandonment of the independent British nuclear deterrent, he was actually on pretty safe ground. After immense sums of money had been poured into it, Britain's Blue Streak rocket has now been declared useless and scrapped, and most people have already drawn the obvious inference. It is that we are just no longer big enough or rich enough to play the nuclear game. We just can't stand up to that kind of gamble. Nobody would therefore be very surprised if the whole concept of an independent nuclear deterrent were shortly to die of inanition.

Militarily, as several American commentators have already pointed out, this would be of no consequence whatever. Psychologically, however, the effect would be enormous, and it will not be of much significance if a handful of British units continued to be equipped with American nuclear weapons. We should still stand forth in all our non-nuclear nakedness and be very conscious of the fact. In these circumstances the image of the Americans would tend to become that of an alien and very powerful people carrying on a work in which we ourselves were employed only in a subservient and subordinate capacity, a work which by threatening the Russians with nuclear attack from these exposed and hideously vulnerable islands was liable to bring total annihilation upon us all. This is a very unjust and ungenerous picture, no doubt, but it is, I think, in that direction that a great many people's minds will move.

These are only future possibilities of course, but even now the protest against nuclear bases in these islands is already formidable, as I have tried to show. If I am asked whence it derives, I should say that it was something that has long lain dormant but has now exploded. It has no doubt been helped along by things like the U-2 affair. It has also quite possibly been assisted by such efforts as the Aldermaston protest march, though to what extent this last should be regarded as a symptom and to what extent a cause is impossible to determine.

Certainly the Aldermaston marchers have attracted a great deal of attention. It is now three years since the Anglican Canon Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral led his protest march to Aldermaston, where fissionable materials are manufactured. In the last two years the march has been repeated, but in the opposite direction, and has ended up with a rally in Trafalgar Square. On the last occasion some ten thousand people had joined the marchers along their forty-mile route.

Some influence has also certainly been exercised by the "C.N.D." or "Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament," whose branches have been rapidly spreading all over the country. This organization stands not only for unilateral nuclear disarmament but for the full treatment, i.e., the removal of all nuclear bases from this country, and with this end distributes literature, holds meetings and so on. Its leadership is, to say the least, noteworthy. The president is Bertrand Russell, the vice-president J. B. Priestley. The executive committee includes such names as Ritchie Calder, the well-known writer and broadcaster on scientific subjects, the archaeologist Jaquetta Hawkes, the archaeologist and historian, A. J. P. Taylor, while among the sponsors are two Anglican Bishops, the ex-moderator of the Church of Scotland, the novelist Sir Compton Mackenzie, Lord Boyd Orr, Benjamin Britten, Michael de la Bedoyere, the editor of the Catholic *Herald,* and many others of comparable standing. The organ of the movement is the brilliantly edited *Tribune,* once Bevan's paper, and the organization's literary output, though necessarily limited in scope, is all that in the circumstances one might reasonably expect.

THESE are not inconsiderable stimuli. For all that, however, I still think that the trend has largely grown out of its own momentum. It has simply developed out of the facts of the case and has attained its present dimensions chiefly because there was nothing to check it. It is really very difficult to adduce convincing arguments in favor of collective suicide—or even in favor of total national annihilation. It is even difficult to adduce such arguments when the only alternative is the certainty of having to live under Communist rule—and in this world nothing is certain but death.

As against this, there are quite a number of arguments that can be used to reinforce a contrary view, not least the moral and theological ones. I don't say that the theological arguments will convince everybody beyond the shadow of a doubt that nuclear weapons must never be used or even kept in readiness for retaliation. I know very well that honest men can differ in their conclusions on this matter. I merely say that these arguments can be used with great effect, particularly when there is already a strong instinctive revulsion against the whole nuclear horror, as is certainly the case here.

It is often charged that the whole agitation is entirely negative (and in this sense unrealistic), that it rarely shows any clear grasp of the implications of what it is demanding or puts forward any concrete plan for dealing with the Communist menace. The objection was admirably stated some time ago in the House of Lords by Lord Birdwood. Speaking of a protest march to the American rocket site at Swaffham, he said "I find one feature of our situation very discouraging and disturbing; that is, that when these worthy men and

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women marched to Swaffham . . . they never seemed to analyze behind the surface. They never looked behind the launching site for the reasons behind the erection of the site. They seemed to be mesmerized by the visible symptom and forget the cause. For them it seems enough to 'sign on the dotted line' and to seek not how to ban the bomb but just to ban it."

All this is perfectly true. Yet there is slightly more to be said for these people than may at first appear. For what is driving them on is something more than mere wishful thinking or a simple animal instinct for survival, though of course that enters into the matter in quite a big way. There is, I think, another element present, an element that is difficult to define. It might best be described, perhaps, as "The revolt against absurdity."

Thanks to nuclear weapons, war now defeats its own object. Yet our only hope of avoiding it resides apparently in using the threat of the very weapons which endow it with that impossible character. Our survival depends on our readiness to ensure that nobody survives at all. We have thus reached a kind of ultimate, a dead end of contradictions like the "quod est absurdum" of a geometrical proposition, and people experience this as a sort of signal for the retracing of steps.

Life, many people feel, may be an ill-contrived affair, but it cannot possibly be as ill-contrived as that. And so they simply react to the whole nuclear business with an uncompromising "No" and leave that confident negation to lead them where it will.

REMEMBER that these are for the most part very simple folk. Whether Khrushchev is sincere when he says he believes in peaceful co-existence, if he is, he can enforce his views on others—these are questions which they feel to be beyond them, as indeed they are beyond most of us even though everything depends on the answers to them. And so they fall back on something that is not quite a theological certitude but is nevertheless not unlike that, since it derives from a certain conception of the character of life and the universe in general.

The real question is what effect this not inconsiderable body of thought and feeling will have in terms of articulate party politics or what it will mean as an electoral issue. As I think Galbraith points out, the Left in the affluent society has been largely deprived of its traditional function. It may well come to concentrate all its energies on this single question of nuclear war—always assuming that there is still time and that the present dangerous situation does not explode into catastrophe before anyone can get around even to going through the motions of doing anything new and decisive about it at all. Whether the Left—or anybody else—can find a solution to this apparently insoluble problem no one can say. But such considerations would scarcely deter the Left from putting a solution forward—or at least from acting as though it possessed one, if there is a real political dividend to be gained thereby.

It is possible that we are now witnessing the birth-pangs of some such process, and it is perhaps in this light that those curious Labor resolutions should be viewed.

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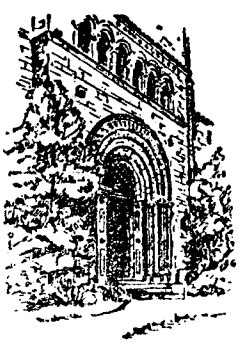

Prospective students should make early application

THOUGHTS OF A FORTIETH YEAR?

Nothing so portentous. But I recall
shame for half a heart, a cheapside,
its better half a ghost mourning
among hucksters. Recall
what dull edge the truth wears to
on a resistant mind. How a bewildering
complexity falls round—snow falls
a common drift blinding a common eye

but under instruments, world upon world
in crystals heaped. The crystals burn and question.

The better wars the good, a fratricide.
Doctrinaire, previous, red with zeal,
men drown the human in a sacred stream
and generate row upon row, eyeless faces
out of this world. Those waters hurry past
to drown polluted use.

Others, if mind gave up
its dead, its dead spoke, must hear footsteps
shaking that sea, a judgment; how the holy
die there, cannot lie there. If skulls spin
witless north by northeast, fish are their radiants
their lightning tongues, schooled in one name
to bear men home. But there
they rot, not rise.

DANIEL BERRIGAN, S.J.

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THE SCREEN

THAT OLD TIME RELIGION

FROM the advertisements for "Inherit the Wind," one might think the film was about monkeyshines. It isn't. Although the picture, which is a thinly-disguised version of the famous Scopes "monkey trial" held in Tennessee in 1925, emphasizes the circus atmosphere that prevailed in this southern town called Hillsboro, it is deadly serious. It has its moments of humor, particularly those introduced in the wisecracks of a cynical reporter, played in smartalecky fashion by Gene Kelly, who is supposedly H. L. Mencken. It has mob scenes that verge on spectacle when the townsfolk rally, in court and out, to the cause of the Fundamentalist lawyer who is their hero. And it has its melodramatic episodes as tension mounts and various people are affected by the continued rows between this lawyer, who insists that the Bible must be interpreted literally, and his agnostic opponent who tears him and his arguments to shreds. But in spite of all the highly entertaining hoopla, producer-director Stanley Kramer's film is thoughtful. And it is not so much concerned with a conflict between religion and science as with the right of man to think for himself.

The young man (Scopes), in this screenplay written by Nathan E. Douglas and Harold Jacob Smith from the stage play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, is almost lost, as in the actual 1925 trial, in the electrically-charged atmosphere that surrounds his case. He is arrested for breaking the state law by teaching the forbidden Darwinian theory of evolution to his class. This teacher (Dick York) and his fiancée (Donna Anderson), who is torn between love for him and respect for her father, the stern local minister, are shunted to the background while the two lawyers carry on. And carry on they do in the magnificent performances of Spencer Tracy and Fredric March. Under Kramer's direction, these two have never been better. If March seems to stand out in his portrayal of Matthew Harrison Brady, it is because his makeup as William Jennings Bryan is so startlingly realistic and his role, as the determined Fundamentalist who insists that a victory in this case will be a monument to God, is so charged with emotion that the audience is moved by him even while disagreeing with him. Perhaps a flaw in the otherwise superb portrayal is the hint in March's overacting that he does not agree with Bryan and consequently allows a touch of caricature to creep in. Tracy's assignment is much more difficult, since he uses practically no makeup and relies on the slow, methodical build-up of reason and argument to suggest the agnostic Darrow. He is aided by emotion too, however, especially in the frustrating scenes in which the Judge (excellently played by Harry Morgan) refuses to let his science-witnesses testify. Furthermore, whether the audience likes or agrees with the Darrow argument, they find themselves pulling for the man and his insistence on freedom of inquiry.

Although playing a much smaller role as Brady's wife, Florence Eldridge gives a performance equal to March's and Tracy's. Her magnificent defense of her husband, who is neither a saint nor a devil but a man of integrity and principle, is one of the high points of the movie. Director Kramer allows his film to rise in a series of such climactic scenes—the most tense of which, no doubt, comes when calm, cool Tracy has angry, shaking March on the stand and March foolishly insists that the earth was created at nine o'clock in the morning on October 23, 4004 B.C. But for me the most stirring scene is the one on the hotel porch when March and Tracy, rocking side by side in rockers, discuss their former friendship and at what point their lines diverged. At first the rockers move in unison, but finally they are out of kilter.

Stanley Kramer gave his film an excellent production. If his film is too theatrical at times, it is also shot with good performances, thought-provoking situations and scene after scene that stirs the audience emotionally. The script also makes mental demands on the viewer, too. Although the story throughout seems to emphasize the superiority of reason over faith, "Inherit the Wind" closes with the Darrow character paying tribute to the Bryan character. After putting the captious reporter in his place, Darrow leaves the courtroom with a volume of Darwin and the Bible.

Kramer may use theatrics, play on our emotions and manipulate the balance in his films, but he does give us movies that make us think. His "Home of the Brave," "On the Beach," "The Defiant Ones," "Member of the Wedding," "The Men," "Death of a Salesman," and "High Noon" gave Hollywood stature. And so does his "Inherit the Wind." A quotation from Solomon is the inspiration for its title: "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

STYLISTIC PERFECTIONS

THE JOSEPHINE of "Pinafore," who is "a captain's daughter," and Mlle. Irma, sweetly complaisant *poule* to the Parisian milieu, do make, indeed, an arresting pair. Nothing unites them but their diversity, their fortitude before the outrages of a comic universe, their security within a stylistic pattern and habitude of uniquely specific national man-

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ners. Each is the child of this time, of that place. The Gilbert and Sullivan "Pinafore," as an instance, launched by Mr. Tyrone Guthrie at the Phoenix with so impeccably starched a middy, and every affection of spit and polish, could never be aught but British, and criticism is left little task but the tribute of homage —that, and wonder at the supreme delicacy with which Gilbert got the stresses of nineteenth century class antagonism into the inverted subtleties of parody.

I have never, in productions of Gilbert and Sullivan, seen this parody element—parodies of aesthetic form, too, as of the conventions of Italian opera—so well and elegantly marked: the real and the imaginary act as constant correctives to one another. Mr. Guthrie may have made a real-break-through here. Indeed, his intuitions could serve as rebuke to those supercilious boobies available at any event of G. & S., and announcing over their intermission cigarettes and lemonade, "of course, I *despise* Gilbert and Sullivan." With time, we might all come to see the art of Gilbert —as does Mr. Albert Cook in his study, *The Dark Voyage and The Golden Mean*—with its "queer probings . . . neurotic failures . . . strange tone of its vision of the golden mean," as one of the central and nourishing documents of Victorian culture.

LIKE the lady herself, "Irma la Douce" is to be enjoyed, yet already a wounded cry has gone up from the great babies of the town—including, curiously, the drama critic of the *New Yorker*—over its alleged coarseness, vulgarity, squalor. One might have hoped for some relief from this everlasting bread sauce of the semi-serious. "Irma" is a constant element of French fantasy, a permanent aspect of French convention; she is the obverse of the coin, minted elsewhere and more darkly, by Daudet, Zola, Colette. She is not a cynicism, but a fact of imagination—the sport and sentimental diversion of a people wise enough to know that only the *genuinely* serious can ever respond to the *authentically* frivolous. To take her as more, or less, is an irrelevance, an impertinence, and tediously middle-class.

Having said this, I should not like, withal, to stake too much on "Irma:" it declines rather into vaudeville, and much of its raffishness is muffled within the ruthless appeal of the accordion. Still, it is, in Mr. Peter Brook's production, everywhere endearing and—well, *douce*. Mr. Keith Mitchell brings a wonderful excess to his tormented virility, and the lissome Miss Elizabeth Seal dances with a secret inner surprise, gathering and wholly guileless, that is radiant. One is reminded again how well the British contrive these restatements of an alien culture. Think, if you dare, how Miss Elizabeth Taylor will pout through the film version, and always—lest we forget, lest we forget—there was "Can-Can." *(At the Plymouth).* RICHARD HAYES.

BOOKS

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WHAT IS POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY? By Leo Strauss. The Free Press. $6.

By FREDERICK D. WILHELMSEN

THE VERY suggestion of a restoration within political philosophy must seem archaic, if not downright perverse, to the bulk of those academicians who practice the discipline of politics within the American academy today. I say that the suggestion must seem archaic because historicism, a first principle of most contemporary political theory, precludes the very possibility of any kind of restoration within political theory: a restoration would imply that political meaning does not take its departure from, and is not identified with, the historical moment in which that meaning is born and within which it must play out whatever role it has within human history. This last, of course, is a cardinal doctrine within historicism.

And I say that the suggestion must seem perverse because that same historicism can see in the restoration of classical political theory little more than the sterile paradox of a band of willful men who have refused to meet what is euphemistically called "the challenge of history." And a meeting of the challenge of history"—that Crowned Ghost in the words of Gabriel Marcel—is the *only* ethical imperative for historicist political theory.

Professor Leo Strauss of the University of Chicago in his last of an impressive series of profound studies—*What is Political Philosophy?*—stands squarely in opposition to this historicism which so dominates the Western mind today. But in his attempt to restore classical political philosophy, Professor Strauss does not fall into the very error he so quietly excoriates in the pages of these carefully written essays. Strauss nowhere maintains that political philosophy as understood in the classical tradition must find itself restored and thus made effective in our day.

Avoiding even that form of determinism which might give comfort to the friends of wisdom, Strauss candidly admits that the modern state may well be irreconcilable with classical political theory because the Western mind today is dominated by a conviction utterly at odds with the tradition: i.e. by the conviction that a world state is desirable. The possibility of a world state—itself discussed theoretically by the classical philosophers—was rejected by them because the material conditions necessary for the world state can come into existence only provided that technology be released

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from the control exerted by the moral order.

This last was unthinkable to both Plato and Aristotle and to the medieval tradition that followed them because that tradition insisted that all art be subordinated to ethical considerations which often run cleanly opposed to artistic, and thus technical, perfection as such:

"The difference between the classics and us with regard to [world] democracy consists exclusively in a different estimate of the virtues of technology. But we are not entitled to say that the classical view has been refuted. Their implicit prophecy that the emancipation of technology, of the arts, from moral and political control would lead to disaster or to the dehumanization of man has not yet been refuted."

Applauding as "both sober and manly" Yves Simon's contention that Western man must act within the structure of technological civilization as it is given him today, Strauss nonetheless adds that "we have no right to applaud a situation that was created by a decision which, however well intentioned, was not evidently virtuous and wise." But the corporate mind of the West seems to accede to just this very proposition which was so foreign to the classical political temper. Strauss draws the only possible conclusion: a further unleashing of the Pandora's box of technics would be the death of classical political philosophy as an effective agent within western civilization.

The earlier essays in the book are given over to tracing just what happened to classical political doctrine within post-medieval civilization. Professor Strauss draws a parallel between the birth of modern science which makes "One World" a possibility and the birth of the new science of politics in Machiavelli. The classical and medieval mind was not unaware of a kind of science that would give man a practical mastery over reality, but it considered such a science to be peripheral to wisdom, an exception to the normal exercise of the human intelligence.

So too the classics were not unaware of the role of power and chance, of selfishness and greed, within the total economy of political life. Nonetheless, the tradition refused to build either its epistemology or its ethics around these extreme cases, these end situations. As wisdom remained the norm for science so did virtue remain the norm for politics. With Bacon the old epistemology was toppled and "the notion of torturing nature, i.e., of the controlled experiment" was placed at the center of the intellectual life and made the very meaning of wisdom itself. Knowledge is power and power is knowledge.

How would one guide the contemporary American ship of state according to Strauss' classical politics? It is difficult to deduce with any precision an exact application of Strauss' doctrine to the contemporary scene. He might reject such a deduction on the grounds that principles must be applied prudentially and one cannot legislate in the abstract for the concrete. Nonetheless some guesses can be made along these lines. Strauss stands firmly against the welfare state but from this one cannot conclude to any version of *laissez-faire* economics. Strauss has accepted the world of mass technology simply because it exists and because we must work within what is given us. Strauss is an enemy of the concept of "One World" because this concept would involve a further subordination of morals to art (i.e. of the political to the technical). Strauss is a friend of that often amorphous thing called the "Jewish-Christian" tradition, but we look in vain for a theology of the political in his writings. Strauss is certainly a conservative but his thought seems distant from the popular conception of conservatism in American politics.

Leo Strauss' preoccupation with politics stems from his preoccupation with wisdom. From the standpoint of statesmanship, political philosophy is indispensable for virtue, he says; from the standpoint of philosophy politics was an introduction into wisdom. It is here, at the point where political philosophy merges into wisdom, that a Catholic philosopher might find himself constrained to reach beyond the classical framework within which Leo Strauss works. I say "might find himself constrained" because there are indications within *What is Political Philosophy?* that Professor Strauss might one day honor us with his reflections on the possibility of history in so far as that theology bears upon the political order.

I forbear from expanding the issue because it takes us beyond a consideration of Professor Strauss' study. I nonetheless introduce the issue deliberately and make it my conclusion for the following reason: have we not heard enough in recent years of a spurious "theology of history", itself heavily influenced by Marxism, that would negate classical politics by justifying in the name of "historical necessity" every brutally existent situation within the modern world? Has not the very mind of Christendom been infiltrated by an historicism that refuses to call into judgment the dehumanization and progressive devitalizing of western civilization because this historicism believes in the "irreversibility" of history? Professor Strauss has traced for us, with the fine eye of a detective, the murder of classical political philosophy. It would be instructive were a comparable figure to trace the role Christians have played in the same destruction.

Fine First Book

WHAT A KINGDOM IT WAS. Poems by Galway Kinnell. Houghton Mifflin. $3.

By JOHN LOGAN

GALWAY KINNELL'S *What a Kingdom it Was* (what a good title it is) is the best first book of poems since James Wright's *The Greenwall* and, cardinal numbers aside, is one of the finest books of the past decade.

Certainly the discerning, small audience of people who continually care about fine poetry will not pass by Kinnell's work, so I have only to call it to the attention of the

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suspicious, the unconverted and the disenchanted—those who are aware perhaps of no middle ground between the bland and the horrendous in our diet of verse, and so go hungry, those who have found only something with eloquence and no meat, like an hors d'oeuvre ("better magazine" verse) or something with the blood and hair still bristling on it, untamed, uncooked, having to be washed down with much wine ("beat" poetry).

Well, Galway Kinnell's book is aperitif, soup, steak, potatoes, salad, dessert, coffee and cognac. Nor do I mean the fare is bourgeoise. Choose your dish. It is a full book and it gets better and better—thirty three poems, many of them sizable, plus a remarkable, 450-line final poem hard to match in American literature, drawn from contemporary life around Avenue C in New York City: "The Avenue Bearing the Initial of Christ into the New World."

Toward that poem as goal the poems of the book move from the charming, naive, almost Elizabethan "First Song" and its fellow pieces in Part I, one of them giving account of a child's disappointing "First Communion," and another a young man's strength and growth and quandary as a hunter: "To Christ Our Lord." The poems in the long Part II include the candid, devoted "For William Carlos Williams" and the beautiful trio "Leaping Falls," "Alewives Pool," and "Promontory Moon," which conjure up the spirit of an intense and rather romanticized Robert Frost.

Elsewhere one feels more Father Whitman. Part II is made up of six unusually ambitious poems, as the nostalgic and touching "Freedom, New Hampshire (For My Brother 1925-1957)" and the extraordinary "Seven Streams of Nevis" where Mr. Kinnell more than any other place in the book shows himself in the role of the Irish Bard.

The concluding poem is an unforgettable experience of reading which recreates the sounds, textures, odors, melodrama and pathos of Manhattan's Avenue C. There are fourteen sections beginning with the early morning music:

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They cry. The mother birds thieve the air
To appease them . . . Ringing in its chains
The New Star Laundry horse comes down the street
Like a roofleak whucking in a pail.

On the Avenue in the spring sunshine we meet a dying patriarch ("His beard like a sod-bottom/ Hides the place where he wears no tie"); a wonderful boy who "From a rooftop . . . fishes at the sky,/ Around him a flock of pigeons fountains"; the newswoman, "Oldest living thing on Avenue C . . . She lives shadowed, under a feeble bulb/ That lights her face, her crab's hands, her small bulk on the crate."

We visit the pushcart market where "A crate of lemons discharges light like a battery," which reminds of the later "phosphorous flashings in the sea, or the feverish light/ Skin is said to give off when the swimmer drowns at night."

There is an important and sustained imagery of fish in the poem, often associated with dying. In the market

The fishes do not die exactly . . . there is little pallor
Only the cataracted eyes which have not shut ever
Must look through the mist which crazed Homer.

We watch the naked fire at Gold's junkhouse ("mausoleum of what we were"):

Perambulator skeletons, bicycles tied in knots
. . . carriages we were babies in,
Springs that used to resist love, that gave in
And were thrown out like whores. . . .

and go home as the light fails and

The figures withdraw into chambers overhead—
In the city of the mind, chambers built
Of care and necessity, where, hands lifted to the blinds,
They glimpse in mirrors backed with the blackness of the world
Awkward, cherished rooms containing the familiar selves.

Night time on the Avenue is "The nighttime/ of the blood," and its people "are laughing and saying,/ Our little lane, what a kingdom it was! oi weih, oi weih." Just so we laugh and say and lament of the street of this poem, chock full as it is with the overwhelming life that strikes the visitor to it, made bearable—even lovable—by art.

Fact and Fable

THE TREND IS UP. By Anthony West. Random House. $4.95.

By WILLIAM ESTY

WHAT SORT OF novel would one expect from the pen of a literary critic who has always demonstrated the literary equivalent of tone-deafness when confronted with the prose fiction of others? Anthony West is the sort of reviewer who dissects the fable under his knife to reveal the attitudes and opinions of its author, which become, in Mr. West's operation, the attitudes and opinions of the characters. These are usually found wanting, whereupon Mr. West passes the appropriate harsh judgment. If Leslie Fiedler is America's *soi-disant* first fully genital literary critic, then West is our first fully rational and responsible one.

One would anticipate that an imperceptive critic, who has never displayed the barest inkling of a notion that creative literature is not simply a yes-no questionnaire to provide us with ratings for his victims' virile sanity and democratic commitment, would write a poor novel. In this instance, the expectation is justified. *The Trend Is Up* is another of these big, shapeless, pointless "fictions," the sort of thing John O'Hara unloads on his victims every few years. It is stuffed with "fact," crammed with money and sex. It seeks to overwhelm with an abundance of machine-tooled "authenticity."

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"He was sick of it all, the good taste of it, the restraint, the politeness, and the abstention from the roaring, vulgar, vital American adventure which was leaving them behind." At nineteen he announces to his pained father, "I'm going to be a speculator, and I'm going to have my first million before I'm thirty."

The rest follows as the night the day. Gavin settles in a sleepy Gulf Coast Spanish cigar town which he helps transform into a glittering modern Floridian horror. He makes that million, and then many more. He marries a snob from another old Massachusetts family. Mr. West, as readers of his *New Yorker* pieces know, is death on snobs, so from the start of the marriage Ilona is "the stranger he had married," resenting sexual pleasure, endlessly finding her husband's life "vulgar," and in general being loathed by one and all for the monster of life-hating bitchiness she is. She gratifyingly ends up an alcoholic and runs away with a homosexual painter to Europe, where she inevitably falls prey to a globetrotting Lesbian. Thus Mr. West smites and punishes; it is a bit embarrassing to be in the same room while his cat-o'-nine-tails rises and falls.

Predictably, the hero goes as a flier to England in the war, where he is confronted by a "brave and true" war widow. Later, when his children grow up, one can be sure that they Don't Understand him, or he them. Something has Gone Wrong. On the last page, the hero returns from the local equivalent of a Mardi Gras celebration to his Big, Empty House.

Meanwhile, we have four hundred and seventy-five pages of the sort of pseudo-documentary one reviewer called "large-scaled, ambitious, abundant." But just as in O'Hara, there is a constant note of falsity. We are pelted with "facts," but . . . but does a young Boston aristocrat, even one turned Florida speculator, toss a coin to a caretaker rather than hand it; does he refer to Negroes as "dinges" and "coons"? Would the right-hand man of a Florida banker deliberately, and stone-sober, excoriate his boss's wife at a V-J Day celebration party (or is the right-hand man just getting in one more lick for his real boss, Mr. West)? Would the very American captain of Hatfield's yacht use British slang? Is this the way things are, really *really* are?

But then *The Trend Is Up* has a burden of symbolism as well as of reportage. There is, for instance, a mineral spring with an upgushing pool that Gavin keeps going back to throughout the novel. Ilona Hatfield naturally hates it, and in the end his son commercially exploits it. The pool symbolizes of course the male orgasm, but also—Life? Beauty? Truth? Wisdom? Anyhow, we may be sure, Something Big.

Since *The Trend Is Up* is a Big novel, the hero is always Searching. On page 100 he realizes that "he had lived the first third of his allotted span like a blind man or a fool." On page 128 his English mistress begs him, "Please don't slip back into pretending . . . not to yourself or anyone." On page 299 "Gavin contemplated the bleak vistas of a life in which they [the lessons of love] never were learned, and for the first time understood poverty." And on the last page of the book he cries, just as we knew he would, "Tell me, tell me, tell me, what I did wrong!" "The shuttered void" does not answer him, but perhaps we can: he just mar-

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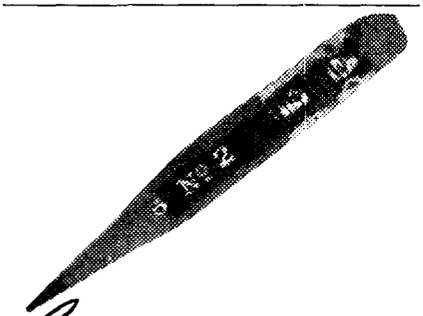

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ried the wrong woman, and then his children grew up.

The Big answer, of course—Mr. West spells it out very carefully—is love. Why, and just how, and to what, is love the answer? We do not ask; this is an American popular novel written in the year 1960: the password is *love*.

Since Mr. West's Florida is Mr. O'Hara's Pottsville with live oaks, *The Trend Is Up* is filled with banal descriptions of love-making, and with such language as "her body seemed to have been made for love" and "he had known just how to give it to her"—the conscientious vulgarity of the anti-snob. In general, Mr. West's prose is careless and characterless—contemptuously mass-produced, like the goods in the Florida factories Gavin Hatfield financed.

In his old age Henry James, a writer whom Anthony West has always regarded as a particularly despicable snob, wrote some wry words about the thousand then-contemporary twins of *The Trend Is Up:* "If it be true that the critical spirit today, in presence of the rising tide of prose fiction, a watery waste out of which old standards and landmarks are seen barely to emerge, like chimneys and the tops of trees in a country under flood—if it be true that the anxious observer, with the water up to his chin, finds himself asking for the *reason* of the strange phenomenon, for its warrant and title, so we likewise make out that these credentials rather fail to float on the surface. We live in a world of wanton and importunate fable, we breathe its air and consume its fruits; yet who shall say that we are able, when invited, to account for our preferring it so largely to the world of fact?"

REVIEWERS

Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, a frequent contributor to several American journals, is now on the faculty of Al-Hikma University of Baghdad.

John Logan has contributed verse and criticism to The Commonweal. His most recent book of poems is *Ghosts of the Heart*.

William Esty, a New York writer and critic, is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal and other publications.

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WE BELIEVE that the American nation stands at a crossroads as important as any in our history. At home a growing population and an expanding technology demand more planning to insure a high rate of growth, to assure jobs and a decent living standard for every working man and woman. Abroad we must develop new solutions to the economic and social problems which are the main causes of the continuing crisis in which we live.

During the past eight years, our national Administration has been characterized by reaction in its domestic policies and confusion in its foreign programs. Efforts to meet such pressing social needs as housing, health care for the aged, a more realistic and inclusive minimum wage, and federal aid to education have been watered down or flatly opposed by the White House. We need a new kind of leadership, a leadership which understands the scope of our needs and is willing to take steps to meet them. We need a leadership which will not be bound by the slogans of the past or by slavish devotion to outmoded ways. We need a renaissance of energy and dedication to assure that this nation, the wealthiest the world has ever seen, can meet its obligations to all its citizens and can symbolize the democratic ideal throughout the world.

We do not think the Republican Party offers this kind of leadership. Its presidential candidate has been closely identified with the failures of the past eight years. The record of Richard Nixon, during his years as congressman and senator, has leaned far more on the side of reaction than of progress. With only a few lonely exceptions, his party has been led by men whose first response is to the needs of big business and special interests.

The record of Senator John F. Kennedy, the Democratic presidential candidate, is as different from his opponent's as night is from day. He has consistently taken the leadership in efforts to improve our social welfare laws and basic labor legislation. During all his years in the House and Senate his has been one of the most consistent voices in behalf of working men and women.

The statistical record is clear. Out of 122 votes he has cast in Congress, Senator Kennedy has voted 120 times on the side of workers and the American people. Nixon, on the other hand, voted on the side of big business and reaction in 59 out of the 69 votes for which he is recorded.

Although the Democratic Party is burdened with a reactionary bloc representing some of the states, certainly if we can expect any leadership in our struggle for economic expansion and social progress it will come from enlightened Democratic leaders, not from a Republican Party largely under the domination of men who look to McKinley and Coolidge for guidance in meeting our needs. Progress in this nation will come under the leadership of men such as John F. Kennedy and his associates, not from the Goldwaters, the Dirksens and the Mundts.

We do not believe that religion is a legitimate issue in this campaign. As workers and union members, Amalgamated members judge a man on his merits, not on his religion or nationality or the color of his skin. Those who promote religious discord in this country are sowing the seeds of hate and bigotry; those who condone it, or who fail to denounce it, can only hope to profit by it. We denounce it with all our hearts.

Not only as union members but as Americans, we believe that this nation needs a rebirth of dedication to our democratic ideals. We must end our policy of drift and retrenchment; we must rid ourselves of uncertainty and fear. We have the strength and the vision and the idealism to accomplish all our reasonable goals. What we need is strong and confident leadership. Along with the organized labor movement as a whole, we believe it will be best provided by John F. Kennedy as President and Lyndon Johnson as Vice President.

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The Choice on Election Day

"This is the choice our nation must make, a choice that lies not merely between two men or two parties, but between the public interest and the private comfort, between national greatness and national decline, between the fresh air of progress and the stale, dank atmosphere of 'normalcy,' between determined dedication and creeping mediocrity."

—*Senator John F. Kennedy*

JOHN F.
Kennedy
President

LYNDON B.
Johnson
Vice President

VOTE DEMOCRATIC

New York State Democratic Committee

MICHAEL H. PRENDERGAST, Chairman

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